Fitness Report—Andrew “Ender” Wiggin

Psychologist number ELI COP A24

With the Buggers threatening the very existence of humanity, there is no more important military decision then how best to lead our fleets as they approach the Buggers’ colonies and home-world. Our Leadership Development Program has been turning out excellent candidates for military leadership for some time, but none are more suitable to lead the human fleet than the candidate in which Colonel Graff has placed his confidence—Andrew “Ender” Wiggin. Wiggin has nearly all of the Indicators of Intelligent Leadership identified by the International Fleet’s Psychological branch, particularly metacognition, creativity, an ability to draw on past knowledge to predict the future, decreasing impulsivity and above all, persistence.

Ender—the boy refers to himself as Ender—thinks carefully about his own actions and reactions, and the actions and reactions of others. He does not simply think, “If X then Y”; the boy is able to act even in ways that are contrary to his own nature if such actions will suit his purpose. The day his external monitor was removed, when he was six years old, Wiggin was attached in the schoolyard by bullies. When asked, later, why he had beaten the leader of the group senseless, Wiggin said it was because he “wanted to win all the next [fights], too. So they’d leave [him] alone.” Not only was he aware at such a young age that bullies will not stop at one confrontation, he was able to reason that brutal behavior in one instance would forestall the bullies’ vengeance. This was in direct conflict with his own preference—after the incident, he cried, because he knew his behavior to have been cruel. In a later instance, when Wiggin was introduced to Salamander army and Bonzo Madrid, he worried at first that he had associated himself with an outcast in that army, Petra Arkanian, and that Madrid’s original contempt for him was due to this association. However, he quickly recognized Madrid’s cool welcome as an attempt by Madrid to draw his own army together in ritual—Wiggin was able to think about, and recognize, Madrid’s thoughts and subsequent actions, even though Wiggin himself would never have reacted to a new soldier as Madrid did. More recently, Wiggin saw through even our subterfuge regarding the Third Invasion. Speaking to Bean one evening in his room, Wiggin clearly stated, “…most boys in this school think that the game is important *for itself*, but it isn’t. It’s only important because it helps them find kids who might grow up to be real commanders, in the real war.” Though he did not guess about our timeline, Wiggin was clearly able to take the evidence of new, tougher game schedules and more difficult opponents so cleverly engineered by Major—now Colonel—Anderson, and extrapolate to the urgency of finding a commander for our forces. His ability to think about what *we* might be thinking, despite his tender age, bodes well for his ability to outthink the enemy--an enemy which thinks, literally, in an entirely alien fashion.

While clear and in-depth thinking are important, Wiggin’s creativity is what truly makes him stand out from the crowd of other, very qualified, boys. It is this very creativity which allowed him to beat the Giant’s Drink test, in the Mind Game, which no other candidate had ever beaten previously. Presented with a classic no-win scenario in the video game, where either of the two drinks his avatar was presented with would kill him, Ender chose, instead of drinking from one or the other, to attack the Giant character instead. That his out-of-the-box thinking leads him to attack is a bonus, from the fleet’s perspective. When he became leader of his own Dragon army at Battle School, Ender was careful to improve on the other commanders’ organization schemes (by having five platoons instead of the usual four, as well as a special-forces team led by Bean), and he avoided the trap of practicing only formations in the Battleroom, instead trusting his toon leaders’ abilities and granting them some independence. Furthermore, Wiggin discovered that reorientation in null-gee was desirable—first, on the shuttle as he left Earth for Battle School, and then in the Battleroom. Noticing that boy soldiers in the game had difficulty attacking the obstacles called “stars” when they were orienting themselves upside-down relative to the corridor gravity, Wiggin admonished his troops that, “the enemy’s gate is down,” which helped the boys not only learn to reorient themselves in space, but also present smaller targets to the enemy armies. This creativity—and the ability to pass it on to those under his command—will help Wiggin a great deal as he leads our invasion force, especially as the Buggers become familiar with his early strategies and tactics.

Wiggin’s ability to draw on past knowledge to predict the future is extraordinary. When he was first removed from his home, Ender predicted that because Graff treated him harshly on the shuttle, the Colonel would be looking out for him in Battle School. Of course, he *was* Graff’s special project, and Graff did keep a closer eye on him than other students. Even if this did not take the form Ender originally predicted, he was accurate in thinking that, somehow, he was special. The treatment he got from Graff, Ender later used on Bean—the most promising of his own soldiers, in order to push Bean to excellence. Furthermore, Wiggin was able to remember Bonzo Madrid’s rousing speech to his army, referred to above, and to deliver a similar pep talk to his own troops the morning of their second battle. Using the lessons from his past to inform his future is one of Wiggin’s strongest skills, along with his self-control.

While all children are impulsive to some degree, acting without thinking their actions through, Ender has shown, more and more, an ability to curb this impulse. His self-control and deliberation are much more mature than those of a typical twelve-year-old. Even his decision to go to Battle School, at the age of six, was deliberate. He did not simply decline to go immediately, as many young boys would—instead, he asked insightful questions of Colonel Graff and allowed Graff’s answers to inform his decision. Later, when Bonzo Madrid gave him an illegal order regarding his free time, Ender asked to see him privately—which could be considered an impulsive act. However, Ender offered his commander a way to save face while still giving Ender what he wanted, which shows an ability to reason and think through a situation from all sides. More recently, Wiggin, realizing that the Buggers were the true enemy, spent hours watching films of Mazer Rakham’s victory over the Bugger fleet seventy years ago. Most children lost sight of the purpose of Battle School, believing it to be merely a training facility, but Ender never gave in to laziness—he kept his eyes on the larger purpose, even at eleven years of age. These are not the actions of an impulsive little boy, but those of a young man preparing to command soldiers in a real war.

The quality that will truly make the difference in the Third Invasion is the one that Ender has most—persistence. Wiggin *never* gives up. This is evident in his play in the Mind Game, where despite many “deaths” of his avatar, Wiggin persisted until he worked out a way to kill the playground children, and to complete the no-win scenario against the Giant. Despite his basically pacific makeup—Wiggin truly dislikes conflict with others, as he feels it makes him too much like his cruel older brother, who was rejected from our program due to his sadistic streak—Ender will not give up when his cause is just. In defending himself against older boys who attacked his practicing Launchies in the Battleroom, and in his conflict with Bonzo Madrid, which unfortunately resulted in Madrid’s death, Wiggin sees things through to the end. Even when he is so exhausted that he is at the breaking point, as he recently was, while Ender *said* he had given up, he still fought his final battle against Griffin and Tiger armies—and did so with creativity and flair, and even won the battle. While Graff has Wiggin on Earth to recuperate from the driving schedule he has been subjected to, Ender, who *wants* to give up, *wants*  to relax simply will not—because he understands what must be done, and that he is the only person who can do it.

There is no question that these qualities of Wiggin’s will serve him very well as commander of our fleet. We have no other potential commander ready to advance to the position for which Wiggin is so well suited, and so well trained. If Earth—and all of humanity—are to survive this Third Invasion, our last contact with the Buggers who so brutally attacked us in the past, Ender Wiggin is our only hope.